

News Items and Public Crime Summary for Week Ending May 8, 2010

Bonaire – Dutch Police Bust Cocaine Smuggling Ring

Dutch police have detained 20 people for smuggling cocaine in containers for in-flight meals and waste on planes flying between the Netherlands Antilles and the Netherlands, police said last week.

"Twenty suspects have been arrested during the last four months in the Netherlands and Bonaire," a Dutch airport spokesman said.

Eleven of the 20 suspects worked for an Amsterdam Schiphol Airport-based company catering for airlines.

Investigators found that the cocaine was hidden in food and waste containers on Netherlands-bound planes.

Police seized more than 50 kilograms (110 pounds) of cocaine, with a street value of two million Euros (US \$2.6 million), and tens of thousands of Euros in cash during 11 searches in the Netherlands. Twelve of the suspects are Dutch nationals, aged 25 to 49, the spokesman said but did not give details. (Caribbean Net News)

Aruba – Prosecutor Demands Four Years in Valero Fraud Case

Two men who were arrested in a US-owned Valero refinery fraud case last September appeared in court last week. The Public Prosecutor has demanded four years imprisonment for a Valero employee and a contractor who allegedly embezzled approximately US \$3 million between February 2007 and July 2009. (Daily Herald)

Aruba – Customs Confiscates 125 Kilos of Narcotics at Barcadera

Aruba Customs officials confiscated 125 kilos of narcotics, hidden in vegetables crates, at Barcadera Harbor, yesterday. Three arrests were made. (Diario)

Aruba - Cayman Islands and Aruba Sign Tax Information Exchange Agreement (TIEA)

Aruba has signed a Tax Information Exchange Agreement (TIEA) with the Cayman Islands. The agreement, exchanged via courier, was considered legally binding following signature on 20 April 2010 by Cayman Islands Premier McKeever Bush in his capacity as Minister of Finance and on 9 April 2010 by Mike de Meza, Aruba's Minister of Finance, Communication, Utilities and Energy. The Cayman Islands signed TIEAs with the Netherlands on 8 July 2009 and with the Netherlands Antilles on 29 October 2009. (Caribbean Net News)

Curacao – New Constitution Vote Scheduled on June 11

The Curacao Island Parliament will vote for the new Curacao Constitution on June 11. Changes to the Constitution require a two-thirds majority support in the legislature. The PAR/PNP/FOL coalition has an 11 of 21-seat majority in the Island Parliament. New

elections are mandatory if the current coalition cannot garner enough support. After elections a simple majority suffices to pass the stalled legislation. The coalition fears that if early Island Government elections are needed, the 10-10-10 target will be in serious jeopardy, because the final Kingdom Round Table Conference, prior to dissolving, is scheduled for September 9. (Various media)

Aruba – Valero Energy Continues to Seek Buyer for Aruba Plant

Leading independent U.S. refiner Valero Energy Corp. Chief Executive Bill Klesse said discussions are continuing with potential buyers of the idled 235,000 barrel-per-day (bpd) US-owned Aruba refinery, at the company's annual meeting last Thursday. Valero is also weighing restarting production at the refinery or forming a joint venture to operate the plant, Klesse said. Valero committed to keep the refinery's staff on payroll through June 1; it idled the plant due to poor refining margins. Aruba's government is expected to submit an agreement worked out with Valero to settle a tax dispute to the nation's parliament soon, Klesse said. The agreement is expected to make it easier to sell the refinery or resume production, he has said. (Various media)

Curacao – Opposition Willing to Support New Constitution

MAN opposition party leader and MP Charles Cooper said the MAN party (5-seats) is willing to support the new constitution if certain changes are made. According to Cooper, coalition and opposition should be able to come to terms on certain points. Island Commissioner Jesus-Leito said that she will listen to the opposition arguments, but room for adjustments at this late stage is limited.

The Kingdom Council of Ministers will vote for the new Curacao constitution on July 9 or August 20, if the Curacao Island Parliament adopts the constitution on June 11. Depending on the approval date, the Royal Decree should be ready for publication mid-July or August 24 at the latest. Subsequently, a final Round Table Conference (RTC) will be held on September 9. The RTC will verify whether all conditions for the constitutional reforms have been complied with. The whole process should be completed by October 10, 2010 on which date the Netherlands Antilles ceases to exist and the new Kingdom constellation will be inaugurated. (Various media)

Aruba – PM Mike Eman to Attend Inauguration Costa Rican President

Aruba PM Mike Eman will travel to Costa Rica to attend the May 8, inauguration ceremonies for new Costa Rican President-elect Laura Chinchilla. (Diario)

Region – Successful Counterdrug Exercise ‘Carib Venture’

Several maritime and aerial units from the Netherlands, U.S., Dominica, and Trinidad & Tobago successfully participated in the counterdrug exercise ‘Carib Venture’. Various suspect vessels were searched and one narcotics transport was disrupted by a cooperative effort of Dutch Frigate Van Speijk, USCGC Valiant, a Dutch helicopter, and a NA&A Coastguard Dash 8 patrol aircraft. The crew of the ‘go fast’ was arrested and handed over to Dominican authorities. (Various media)

Antilles – Narcotics Seized, Arrests Made on St. Maarten

Netherlands Antilles law enforcement authorities have arrested five men Wednesday after an intense narcotics investigation that spanned at least seven islands and countries in the region. Authorities apprehended a 6th person yesterday, according to a statement from prosecutors. Several agencies from the Netherlands Antilles, U.S., South America and other countries contributed to the arrests. Two businessmen were arrested in Philipsburg and Simpson Bay. Investigations reached as far as Colombia, Venezuela, Dominica, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. Also, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and the Dutch Royal Marechaussee were involved. The Police Arrest Team caught one suspect with a loaded firearm in St. Maarten and 179 kilograms of cocaine were seized from one suspect's house. (Daily Herald)

St. Maarten - 4th Place at TripAdvisor Travelers' Choice Awards

St. Maarten/St. Martin is ranked 4th in the latest TripAdvisor Travelers' Choice Awards Top 25 Destinations in the Caribbean and Mexico, one spot ahead of Aruba, and just below Havana, Cuba. "Get the experience of visiting two island colonies in the same 37 square miles. Saint Maarten/Saint Martin's spicy marriage of Caribbean, French and Dutch cultures matches its physical diversity: the island is both urban and untamed, with rain forest-like landscapes, white beaches, and amazing caves and wildlife," TripAdvisor wrote about the island.

TripAdvisor is the largest online travel community in the world. It began its TripAdvisor Travelers' Choice Destinations Awards in 2008 to "honor the world's top destinations, earning their distinction from those who know them best 'real travelers.'" (Daily Herald)

Aruba – Icahn Enterprises LP Acquires The Aruban Resort

U.S. citizen Carl Icahn, through ICAHN Enterprises LP, acquired the Aruban Resort for US \$20 million at an auction yesterday. Mr. Icahn is a shrewd and successful businessman with experience in various industries including hotels and gaming. ICAHN Enterprises LP has reportedly expressed a commitment to immediately begin investing millions of dollars into the villas, resort infrastructure, and the new casino. (Various media)

CURAÇAO

Crime April 29 – May 6

On April 29 a woman was beaten by her former husband in Rio Canario. The irate man also fired a random shot with a handgun. No injuries were reported. On May 2 a vehicle occupant fired several shots near Julian. There were no injuries (Extra).

New National Guard duties to be formalized

Parliament's Central Committee will discuss an amendment to the ordinance regulating the National Guards of Curaçao, St. Maarten, Bonaire and St. Eustatius. The amendment serves to formalize duties already carried out by the various National Guards, namely to assist law enforcement agencies in

maintaining public order and to provide additional manpower in times of natural or man-made disasters (Daily Herald).

ARUBA

Crime April 29 – May 6

On May 2 a Chinese minimarket in Primavera was robbed by two masked men. The same evening, a Pizza Hut restaurant in Sasaki was robbed by three men. The following day a man was stabbed and killed during an altercation in Sabana Basora. On May 4 a British tourist couple was robbed by four vehicle occupants near Havana Beach Club (Bon Dia Aruba).

ST. MAARTEN

Crime April 29 – May 6

On May 5 two women were robbed in the parking lot of the Tamarind Hotel in Pointe Blanche (Daily Herald).

"The Weekly Press Summary is a compilation of stories running in the Netherlands Antilles and Aruban press that is intended to alert readers about items of interest to them. There is no interpretation or verification of the facts contained therein."